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Travel ban slams lid on UN spy nests

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SOME 500 UN staffers
from the Soviet Union
and five other coun-
tries — tabbed by
Washington as spies —
will be barred from
travel outside the New
York City area start-
ing Sunday, the U.S.
announced yesterday.

The travel ban, which limits Secretariat workers to within a 25-mile radius of Columbus Circle, already applies to diplomats, journalists and other government officials from the six countries. The other countries involved are Afghanistan, Cuba, Iran, Libya and Vietnam.

The State Dept. action was mandated under legislation pushed through Congress in July by Sen. William Roth (R-Delaware).

"It's a response to a serious concern over clandestine activities by employees of the Secretariat from the USSR and certain other coun-

tries," said Irene Payne,
a spokesman for the
U.S. Mission.

"Such activities," she told The Post, "are inconsistent with the status of these persons as international civil servants and they pose a threat to the security of the U.S."

Over the decades since the UN was established in New York, dozens of Soviet staff members have been deported.

In a recent book, defector
Arkady Shevchenko,
who was once the top
ranking Soviet on the
UN staff, confirmed
that half of the Soviet
nationals in New York
are "full-time spies."

Unlike Soviet diplomats, they have been able to travel freely across the United States under their UN cover jobs.

But starting on Sunday, they and the other UN staff members covered by the law must submit requests to travel outside the 25-mile zone to the State Dept's Office

of Foreign Missions on E. 42d St.

If their travel is on official UN business, the U.S. office will book their flight and hotel arrangements outside the zone. The office also considers personal requests for recreational travel on a case by case basis.